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LETTER DATED 22 JANUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to inform you that on Monday, 21 January, the Ambassador of Iraq was called to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to receive an official protest from the French Government following the decisions announced by Iraq with respect to prisoners of war.

The need for strict compliance by Iraq with the rules of humanitarian law, and in particular with the third Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, which Iraq has signed and ratified, was firmly recalled on this occasion. The third Convention does not provide that, in order to benefit from its provisions, prisoners should be the subject of a public declaration by the forces of which they form a part.

France, for its part, will apply the Geneva Convention to all prisoners, whether or not declared. It will treat its prisoners humanely.

The blatant breach of the Geneva Conventions that the putting into effect the decisions announced by Iraq would constitute arouses the indignation of the international community. Persons guilty of such breaches will have to answer for them, whatever their level of responsibility.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Pierre-Louis BLANC

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